

# Magazine Feature Section

## HEREDITY in MOTION PICTURE WORK

### LETTERS FROM A CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ACTOR BY A. H. GIEBLER

**DEAR DAVE:**  
Well, Dave, I want to tell you about that Sunday-school entertainment that I went to because them women wanted me to come so they could have a movie play to run off and the actor in it so they could see what a big movie actor like me looks like, and I could make them



"I got chased all around the house in the rain."

a little speech and tell them how the movies are made.

But I didn't make no speech on account of having such a bad cold, and I wouldn't have went at all but J. J. Murphy said:

"Do you want to make them people sore and disappoint all them girls that want to take a look at you?"

The way I come to get that bad cold was from working in a play with rain suit in it. We don't make pictures of it raining like you think we do, Dave, because it don't rain when the sun shines and you can't make outside movies when the sun don't shine, and if they had to wait for rain to come along every time they wanted to have a scene of that kind they would just have to wait till it rained.

This picture where I worked in the rain scene is where I go to see a girl that I like and her pa won't let me come in the house and the bulldog won't let me go out of the yard, and I get chased all around the house in the rain, which is made by a rain-making machine that is like a big sprinkler, only there's more water in one of them movie rainstorms than there is in any cloud you ever saw.

After the scene was over I says to J. J. Murphy:

"Hurry with them other scenes, I am getting cold."

He says:

"You poor boob, we ain't going to make them other scenes till tomorrow. Get that cold make-up off of you or you'll have bronchitis or something." And the next day I started sneezing like a house afire and my nose was red.

That was the day of the entertainment that was to be pulled off that night, and I said:

"Oh, pshaw, I won't let a little thing like a bad cold keep me away and disappoint them women," but when J. J. says that evening,

"Everybody go out and get some cats and come back to the studio while we make them interiors," I told him I couldn't go to no entertainment, because you can't be at two places at once, and he said:

"We only need you in one scene. You can beat it in time to go there, easy."

I said: "Yes, but won't I be awful tired working, and I've got such a bad cold."

He said: "Tom, I didn't think you was afraid of a bunch of women," and I said, "I ain't afraid of no bunch of women," and J. J. says,

"Well, then, go and let 'em gaze on you and make 'em a little speech, otherwise you'll make them sore at the whole moving-picture industry and there's lots of people that go to Sunday school in this broad land of ours. What if all them people quit going to the movies? It would cripple the business, and a lot of actors would lose their jobs."

And that's right, Dave, you got to be careful and not make people mad in this business. While we was making them other scenes of that brakeman picture I got to studying up that speech to make to them people, and I couldn't think of nothing on account of having that cold in my head, and I said to J. J.:

"Why don't you send Bennie Steinbush to make the speech and just let me go along for them to look at, and Bennie can tell them about what a fine actor I am."

J. J. said, "What's the matter? Got cold feet again?" I says, "No, I got a cold in my head."

Bennie says, "Good! Then I'll get in on some of that popularity stuff myself, I'd just like to go over there and make 'em a speech. I'll tell 'em about Tom, but I won't forget to tell 'em about little Bennie, and I'll bet I make a hit. All them girls will want to kiss me, I guess."

I said, well, I guessed I could go and make

them a little speech by myself, only I wished I didn't have this cold.

Bennie says, "Come with me, I'll fix that so you won't know you ever had a cold." And we went to a place called Jake's Place, and Bennie said, "Jake, shake hands with Mr. Boggs, the celebrated movie actor. He's going out in society, and needs a little bracer."

And Mr. Jake says, "Yes, he looks like one. What he needs is one of my stingers." And we drunk one of them, and it made you feel good, and I said, "How much does them drinks cost?"

Jake says, "Three for a quarter."

I told him we didn't want but two, and he said the drink was patched and the inventor had to drink one every time anybody else does, and so I bought a quarter's worth of the stingers, and Bennie says, "Don't you cold feel better now?" and I said, "Yes, it is better."

A man come up and butted in to us while we was talking, and Jake says to him, "Who sent any messenger boy for you to come and horn in on us this way? I'll tap you with this beer mallet if you don't beat it."

But Bennie says, "Desist, Jacob. The gentleman is attracted by my friend Boggs, who is such a famous actor that people take all kinds of chances to get to talk with him."

The man said he was an admirer of genius, and he was an awful nice man, and he said he had always wanted a chance to talk to a real live movie actor, and I bought some more stingers and give him one, and then I said, "Well, I'll have to go and get this make-up off and go to that Sunday-school entertainment."

And then Bennie Steinbush thought of a good scheme.

"You just go the way you are, Tom," he says, "and set down in the back of the hall. If folks know you they will be bashful about saying nice things about you to your face; but if they don't know you, you can have lots of fun listening to what they say about your acting when the film is run off."

I thought that was a good scheme, and Jake says, "I did that when I got married. My wife's folks had never saw me, and I went around and didn't tell them who I was, and I said to her old man, 'Did you know your daughter was married?' And the old man said, 'Yes, she married a bum.'"

Then the other man, who thought I was such a good actor says to me, "Have you got change for a dollar?" I said yes, I had change for a dollar and I gave it to him, and he bought more stingers, and I said, "Where is the dollar I give you change for?" And he says, "Oh, I'll hand that to you in the morning." And then Jake says, "Let's have another round." And we did, and my cold was all gone, and I told them all good-by and shook hands with them and a lot

more people who were in the place, and told them I would send them all my picture, and then I went to the entertainment.

There was a whole lot of people going in the hall, and there was a great big picture of me and "Strongheart" having that fight in the schoolhouse scene posted up on the outside, and a lot of people was looking at it, and I stood up alongside of the picture so they could see what I look like, but none of them didn't know who I was because I had them brakeman clothes and make-up on, and a man says, "Stand to one side; you are blocking up the picture gallery."

I went into the hall and they charged me a quarter to go in, and I didn't think they ought to have done that, but it was for a good cause and I paid and didn't say nothing. There wasn't hardly any seats but way back in the hall, and I set down behind a lot of girls and their boys who had brought them there.

They started running off that picture of me as the backwoods school-teacher, and I tell you, Dave, if you see yourself up there on the screen acting out a piece, you don't know how funny it feels, and them girls got to talking and one said, "Ain't he splendid?" And one of the men, a little bit of a runt, said: "If that guy is an actor then I'm a pugilist, and I can whip Willard and Moran both at once."

And one of the others says: "He don't act. That's the part of a big rube he's got to play and he's acting natural, that's all."

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### Photoplay Answers

**A.** H. G.—The rejection slip you send is the regular form used by the Universal Company. It is a polite rejection, and the kind that is sent to all writers who send in plays that the company cannot use. It means nothing outside of the fact that this particular play has been turned down. The same play might sell at the next place you send it, and it might even be taken by this company after a while.

There are many things that cause a rejection. The play may not be the type the company is making; they may not have players suited to the parts, or they may have made a play along similar lines. The editors of the big companies get hundreds of plays a week. They can do no more than send a printed form of rejection.

Do not allow a rejection slip of any kind to give you any worry. If you think you can write and have confidence in your work, keep right on. When a play comes back send it out again; after it has been out five or six times, read it over; you may see a way of improving it.

**P. S.**—True happenings, as a rule, do not make good photoplays. Of course, everything is based on reality; it might have happened, or it could happen, but most professional writers do not base their plays on things that have happened to them. A prolific writer is never at a loss for plots, and the plots that are hatched right out of the brain incubator are the very best kind. Facts are sordid things. Take any actual occurrence and analyze it, and you will find that it seldom has any story material in it outside of one bare incident, and stories and plays must be idealized, and you have to take your true story and twist it around to fit these conditions, and you might just as well work on an imaginary plot and be done with it.

It is more elastic and can be molded easier. Do not tell a studio editor that the play you are sending is a true story, or the story of your own life, or of one of your friends. It will not impress him in the least.

One of the girls says: "You boys are just jealous because all the girls are in love with the movie actors," and another man said: "That guy ain't no actor, he's just stalling around, and, besides, nice girls don't fall in love with actors, it's only chickens that do that."

I was going to tell them who I was, but they got to the part of the film where me and Strongheart and them roughneck extras has that big fight, and I forgot all about them, and pretty soon I didn't know what I was doing, but I was waving my arms and going through that scene again right there, and I grabbed a man in front of me and was tussling him around, and he said, "You're crazy." And an usher came up and wanted to know what was wrong, and I kinda come to myself and remembered where I was, and then the man who was running the show made a speech. He said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—We have a treat for you tonight. The actor that just acted in the picture you seen tonight will make an address and tell us some interesting things about the life of a moving picture actor. He was to have been here by now, but he was detained and we have sent an automobile to the studio for him."

An usher came up to me and says, "You come with me, sir," and I had to climb over everybody's feet getting out of there, and there is the ignorant people out here, Dave. They don't know nothing, sometimes, and nearly all tried to trip me and make me fall, and once I did set down on a woman's lap, and she says:

"When you are rested I hope you will get up and go on," and I told the usher, "My name is Boggs, and I am the movie actor," and he said, "Yes, yes, I know. Just come with me."

I thought he was going to take me up to the front of the hall, so I could make that speech, but he opened a door and we was on the outside, and he says, "Now you beat it or I'll call a policeman."

Well, good-by, Dave; I've kinda got some of that cold left and don't feel any too good yet.

TOM.

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